

Animal Farm Study Questions

- *The most important questions are highlighted.*
- *The page numbers given in some questions may differ from other editions of the book.*

Chapter 1

- 1.** Animal Farm is a metaphor for human society. What group in the human world do the farm animals represent? What does “man” represent? Explain these analogies—in what way are these things similar?
- 2.** What is Major’s solution to the problem of the animals’ situation, and what vision of their future does he have? What is this equivalent to in human politics?
- 3.** What people in the human world might the wild animals represent? In what way are these people “wild”?
- 4.** What are the functions of the song “Beasts of England”? Why is it so effective?

Chapter 2

- 1.** What danger is there in the pigs’ leadership of the animals, especially Squealer, who is described as being such an eloquent speaker that he can “turn black into white”?
- 2.** What is Sugarcandy Mountain equivalent to in the human world? Why do you think Moses (the raven) wants to encourage this belief?
- 3.** Why do you think the animals agree that none of them should live in Mr. Jones’ house, wear clothing, etc.? What is the house equivalent to in the human world?
- 4.** Why do the pigs reduce the ideology of Animalism to seven commandments? What equivalent to this is there in the human world?
- 5.** What sign is there at the end of the chapter that Animal Farm might not be such a utopia after all?

“Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.” –Friedrich Nietzsche

Chapter 3

- 1.** What examples of foreshadowing can be found in this chapter?
- 2.** What methods do the pigs use to brainwash the other animals?
- 3.** What might old Benjamin mean when he replies to the animals’ questions by saying, “Donkeys live a long time”?
- 4.** What function do the animal committees have, and what side effect might such “re-education” have?
- 5.** What is meant by “taming” or “re-educating” the wild animals, and how might the animals justify this with their animalism ideology? What examples of this sort of thing can you think of in the real world?
- 6.** Why are the Seven Commandments reduced to the one maxim, “four legs good, two legs bad,” and what effect does it have? How might such a maxim be dangerous?

7. What purpose might Napoleon have in raising the puppies himself?
8. How does Squealer convince the other animals to accept the pigs' demand for all of the milk and apples? Is this a sincere and legitimate (valid, justifiable) argument?

Chapter 4

1. What might Mr. Pilkington and Mr. Frederick, who dislike each other and always disagree, represent? What might the stories they spread about Animal Farm be equivalent to in the real world?
2. What one factor contributes most to the successful and uncontrollable spread of animalism?
3. What is the farmers' attack on Animal Farm equivalent to in the real world? Why do you think the animals win so decisively, even though Mr. Jones has a gun? (Consider Snowball's speech at the sheep's funeral.)
4. What does Boxer's reaction to the apparent death of one person show about him? What does Snowball's reaction show about him, and what danger might there be in such an attitude?
5. How are the "animal hero" awards an example of foreshadowing?

Chapter 5

1. Why do you think Mollie leaves Animal Farm? What things are important to her? What kind of people in the real world might her character represent?
2. Why do Snowball and Napoleon disagree so often? Think carefully about this. What tactic does Napoleon use repeatedly to disrupt Snowball's speeches and prevent discussion of certain subjects?
3. What argument does Snowball use to get the animals to support his idea for building the windmill, despite all of the hard work it will require? Do you think this argument is sincere? What counter-argument does Napoleon make? Is this argument sincere?
4. How do the animals respond to Snowball and Napoleon's debates—how does each speech affect their opinion? How do they always respond to Squealer's reassurances? What does this show about the animals, and how might this relate to the real world?
5. Why do you think Napoleon is so opposed to Snowball's plan? Why doesn't he fight harder to convince the animals not to vote for it?
6. After Napoleon announces that the windmill will be built after all, how does Squealer explain Napoleon's former opposition to it? Why do the animals accept his explanation?

Chapter 6

1. Why are the animals happy in their work, despite the fact that they work like slaves? What is ironic about their reason for being happy?
2. What foreshadowing is there in this chapter regarding Boxer?
3. How do the pigs handle their violations of the Seven Commandments—how do they get the other animals to accept actions that had once been forbidden?
4. Why do you think that Napoleon vacillates between a business agreement with Mr. Pilkington and one with Mr. Frederick? Why doesn't he make agreements with both of them?

5. What is the most likely cause of the destruction of the windmill? What reasons might Napoleon have for telling the animals that Snowball destroyed it? How does he make this story convincing?

Review Question: What ominous changes in Napoleon's behavior and the conditions on Animal Farm occur in Chapters 5 & 6?

Chapter 7

1. How does Napoleon maintain Animal Farm's reputation and "disprove" the rumors being spread about it? Why is this so important?

2. What minor rebellion happens among the animals, and how does Napoleon deal with it?

3. What major tactic do the pigs use to keep the animals unified and obedient and to keep them from being bothered by all of the things that start to go wrong?

4. Why do the cows all think that Snowball milks them in their sleep, and why do so many animals confess to various crimes? Are these stories true? Do you think the four pigs really collaborated with Snowball? Why did Napoleon kill them?

5. Why do you think the pigs forbid the animals to sing *Beasts of England*? What is the significance of the first lines of the new song written by Minimus?

Chapter 8

1. How does Squealer "prove" to the animals that conditions on Animal Farm have gotten better? What other tactics of his are similar to this?

2. What new signs are there that Napoleon has become a tyrant? What effect do his new rituals, such as having the gun fired on his birthday, have on the animals? What irrational behavior shows that the animals have been brainwashed into accepting Napoleon's new status?

3. What stories are told about Pinchfield Farm and Frederick? Do you think these stories are true? Why are they being told? What does Napoleon later say about these stories after he sells the timber to Frederick?

4. What turns the tide of the Battle of the Windmill in favor of the animals, and why?

5. Why is it announced that Napoleon is dying?

6. What is the meaning of Squealer's midnight accident, which only Benjamin understands, and why doesn't Benjamin explain it to the other animals?

Chapter 9

1. How is the sentence "As yet no animal had actually retired on pension" an example of foreshadowing?

2. Why does Squealer describe each reduction in the animals' rations as a "readjustment" rather than a reduction?

3. How does the passage of time make it easier for the pigs to control the other animals?

4. Why do the pigs organize more songs, more speeches, and more processions for the animals?

5. What is ironic about the presidential election?
6. Why do the pigs allow Moses to remain on the farm and even give him an allowance of beer, even though he doesn't do any work?
7. Why do you think Boxer is so determined to work hard, despite the harm it does to his health?
8. What is ironic about the "memorial in Boxer's honor"?

Chapter 10

1. Why is Benjamin "more morose and taciturn than ever" since Boxer's death?
2. How is the Republic of the Animals, foretold by Major, like Sugarcandy Mountain?
3. Why do you think the animals never rebel again?
4. Why does Squealer keep the sheep separated from the other animals for a week?
5. Why do the pigs teach themselves to walk on two legs?
6. What is the real meaning of the maxim "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others," and why is it expressed in this way?
7. Why are the pigs finally able to be friends with human beings?
8. What is significant about the changes that Napoleon announces in his speech to the humans at the party?

Review Questions

1. What do you think are the major themes and messages of the book?
2. What evolution do the pigs undergo in the novel, and what theme does this suggest? Do you think the pigs ever intended for Animal Farm to be a true utopia?
3. What do you think is the most important factor in the pigs' rise to tyrannical power—what makes this possible? Think of all of the tactics the pigs use to keep the animals unified and obedient—what do these tactics rely on for their effectiveness? How does the passage of time make it easier for the pigs to control them?
4. What major tactic do the pigs use to keep the animals unified and obedient and to keep them from being bothered by all of the things that start to go wrong? What characteristics of human nature does this show?
5. What role does the revision of history play in the novel? Cite examples. What characteristics of human nature does this show?
6. How would you describe Orwell's tone in the novel? Find examples other than the ones below:
p. 84: *Out of spite, the human beings pretended not to believe that it was Snowball who had destroyed the windmill.*
p. 98: *Somehow or other, the last two words had slipped out of the animals' memory.*
p. 108: *Even Napoleon, who was directing his operations from the rear, had the tip of his tail chipped by a pellet.*
p. 133: *All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.*